Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 1998-99

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development

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Table of Contents

The Saskatchewan Economy 1

Department Overview 2

Mission Statement 3

Organization by Function 5

Policy and Co-ordination 7

Operations Division 11
- Regional Services Branch 11
- Business Development Unit 15
- Program Development and Support Branch 18
- Special Projects Branch 26

Information Technology Office 27

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
- Marketing and Corporate Affairs 28
- Synchrotron Branch 30
- Corporate Management Division 31
- Saskatchewan Business Development Office, Ottawa 34

Financial Report 35

Legislative Responsibilities 37

Publications 38

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development Offices 40

Glossary of Abbreviations 41

Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Jack Wiebe
Lieutenant-Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

May it please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999.

Janice MacKinnon
Minister of Economic and
Co-operative Development

The Honourable Janice MacKinnon
Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development

Dear Madam:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999.

Respectfully submitted,

Fraser L. Nicholson
Deputy Minister

The Saskatchewan Economy

Saskatchewan's economy experienced exceptional growth during the period 1992-98. Over that period, the province's economy grew at an average rate of 3.6 per cent per year, the second highest in Canada, despite a slowdown in global economic conditions and the consequent decline in commodity prices. Manufacturing and processing, and most service sectors, including retail and wholesale trade, continued to make strong contributions in 1998. Non-residential construction activity was also boosted by strong demand.

Employment in 1998 was recorded at 476,300, an increase of 6,300 from 1997 and 27,800 from 1992. Between 1992 and 1998, employment increased by 6.2 per cent and the unemployment rate dropped from 7.9 per cent in 1992 to 5.7 per cent in 1998.

Saskatchewan's population in 1998, at 1,024,387, was over 2 per cent higher than the level observed in 1992. This increase in population can be attributed to a higher natural rate of population growth (births minus deaths) and a declining rate of net inter-provincial migration (the number of people leaving the province versus the number moving to the province).

Saskatchewan's manufacturing sector has emerged as a valuable contributor to the provincial economy. The sector's output increased at an average rate of 23 per cent over the period 1992-98. Manufacturing shipments of the electrical products and food processing industries reported particularly strong results over the same period, with shipments increasing by 44 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively.

Retail sales remained strong in 1998, exceeding $7.6 billion and matching the previous year's record high. Consumer spending on durable goods, particularly clothing and furniture, showed considerable strength, spurred by low interest rates and a reduction in the provincial sales tax.

Potash production in 1998 resulted in a record 8.6 million tonnes, an increase of 4 per cent compared to 1997. This strong showing in sales was a result of robust movement in both the overseas and domestic markets. The high demand for potash continued throughout 1999 for both markets.

Total exports of goods abroad continued to show strong results in 1998, despite a downturn in global markets. Exports totaled $9.1 billion in 1998, slightly below the record of $10.6 billion in 1997, but 9.5 per cent above the average for the period 1992-98.

Most independent forecasters expected Saskatchewan's economy to show further growth in 1999 and beyond, in part due to major projects like the Alliance Pipeline and the gradual recovery of the global economy and non-agricultural commodity prices. In Fall 1999 the Conference Board of Canada anticipated Saskatchewan's economy to grow by 2.0 per cent in 1999 and 2.4 per cent in 2000.

Department Overview

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development has as its corporate vision an innovative, prosperous and sustainable Saskatchewan economy with full participation. During the 1998-99 fiscal year, the department worked diligently with its business, co-operative and community partners to progress towards attaining that vision.

The department's programs and activities follow broad strategic government directions for economic development. These directions are to:

- identify opportunities that exist for business and co-operative establishment, expansion or location;
- provide an integrated government response to these opportunities;
- provide economic advice and guidance to individuals and enterprises;
- ensure that Saskatchewan people have the required skills and expertise;
- vigorously promote the export of Saskatchewan products and services;
- create a pro-growth regulatory environment; and
- promote an image of Saskatchewan that shows the province as innovative and growth-oriented.

During the fiscal year, the department undertook a major reorganization to focus its resources to a greater degree on innovation, co-operatives and community and regional economic development and to provide better regional delivery of services to its clients. The reorganization resulted from extensive organizational consultations and reviews, both within and outside the department.

The reorganization involved an integration of co-operatives services throughout the department, with co-operative development consultants located in most of its regional offices. The department also introduced a new Co-operative Development Assistance Program to provide new and emerging co-operatives with support for organizational development and feasibility studies.

Community economic development continued to be an important thrust of the department, with significant new funding and resources allocated to the province's Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs). These resources included new REDA training programs for board members and youth and an enhancement fund to support business infrastructure projects undertaken by the REDAs.

Another initiative in community economic development was targeted at low-income neighbourhoods in Saskatchewan's largest cities. The department in conjunction with Saskatchewan Social Services supported the establishment of Neighbourhood Development Organizations (NDOs) in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert. NDOs are intended to help community partners improve the economies of their neighbourhoods by co-ordinating such potential services as education and training, business development and leadership, business development loans, and co-operative housing.

The department was the champion in the provincial government of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron project and worked with partners and stakeholders across Canada to secure this $174 million research facility for the province and the nation. All that effort was rewarded at the end of the fiscal year when the Canada Foundation for Innovation announced that it would contribute $56.4 million to the project, thus making the synchrotron a reality. Canada's largest scientific project in a generation will now be built on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan, providing a significant boost to the province's research community.

During the fiscal year, the department and Western Economic Diversification Canada negotiated a major four-year $40 million economic development agreement. The new Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) is designed to encourage Saskatchewan's economic growth through innovation and support projects in economic infrastructure, tourism, export and marketing, and rural and northern economic development. The first project funded under the WEPA was the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, a key facility in the new Regina Research Park.

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Other department highlights in 1998-99 included:

- working with Saskatchewan Justice to draft New Generation Co-operatives legislation to help producers undertake new value-added processing activity, particularly in rural Saskatchewan;
- introducing the Provincial Nominee Program, a two-year immigration pilot project that allows Saskatchewan to nominate skilled workers and business persons to fill skill shortages in key economic sectors;
- continuing to work with the Department of National Defence and Bombardier to market the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) project at 15 Wing Moose Jaw (In September 1998 Denmark became the first country to sign on for training);
- providing more than $3.5 million in support under the Strategic Initiatives Fund to research projects that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities;
- organizing and co-ordinating the first meeting of Western Economic Development Ministers in five years;
- introducing the Youth Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (Youth PACE) to provide advice on the economic priorities of young people to both the department's minister and the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training;
- announcing the registration of Saskatchewan's first provincially based Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation "pool fund";
- establishing both the government's Information Technology Office and its Year 2000 (Y2K) Co-ordination Office within the department;
- releasing in conjunction with the National Research Council the *Blueprint for Innovation*, a document outlining Saskatchewan's strengths, challenges and opportunities in building an innovative, knowledge-based economy; and
- implementing the Saskatchewan Business Ambassadors Program, a marketing program to help travelling business people promote Saskatchewan as a good place in which to do business (the program, along with the department's international marketing video, was recognized with three Saskatchewan Awards for Communications Excellence).

1999-2000 Objectives

- Begin work on a new economic development strategy for the province that builds on the successes of the *Partnership for Renewal* and *Partnership for Growth* strategies;
- Work with forestry partners to help Saskatchewan's forest industry capitalize on significant development opportunities;
- Continue to support the growth of other key industry sectors through co-operation with industry, other provincial departments and the federal government;
- Encourage regional and rural economic growth by continued support to REDAs, and by helping foster greater collaboration among those organizations and other regional economic development partners;
- Secure additional partnerships for, and investments in, the synchrotron and maximize Saskatchewan supplier opportunities on this project;
- Continue strong support to Saskatchewan's co-operative sector and in particular promote the new generation co-operative model as a structure for new value-added processing activity by producers;
- Create a business environment conducive to the expansion of electronic commerce in the province;
- Ensure that all government departments, agencies and systems are Y2K compliant; and
- Lay the groundwork for new comprehensive investment attraction and marketing activities that promote the province's economic strengths.

Mission Statement

To grow and diversify the Saskatchewan economy by building on our existing strengths.

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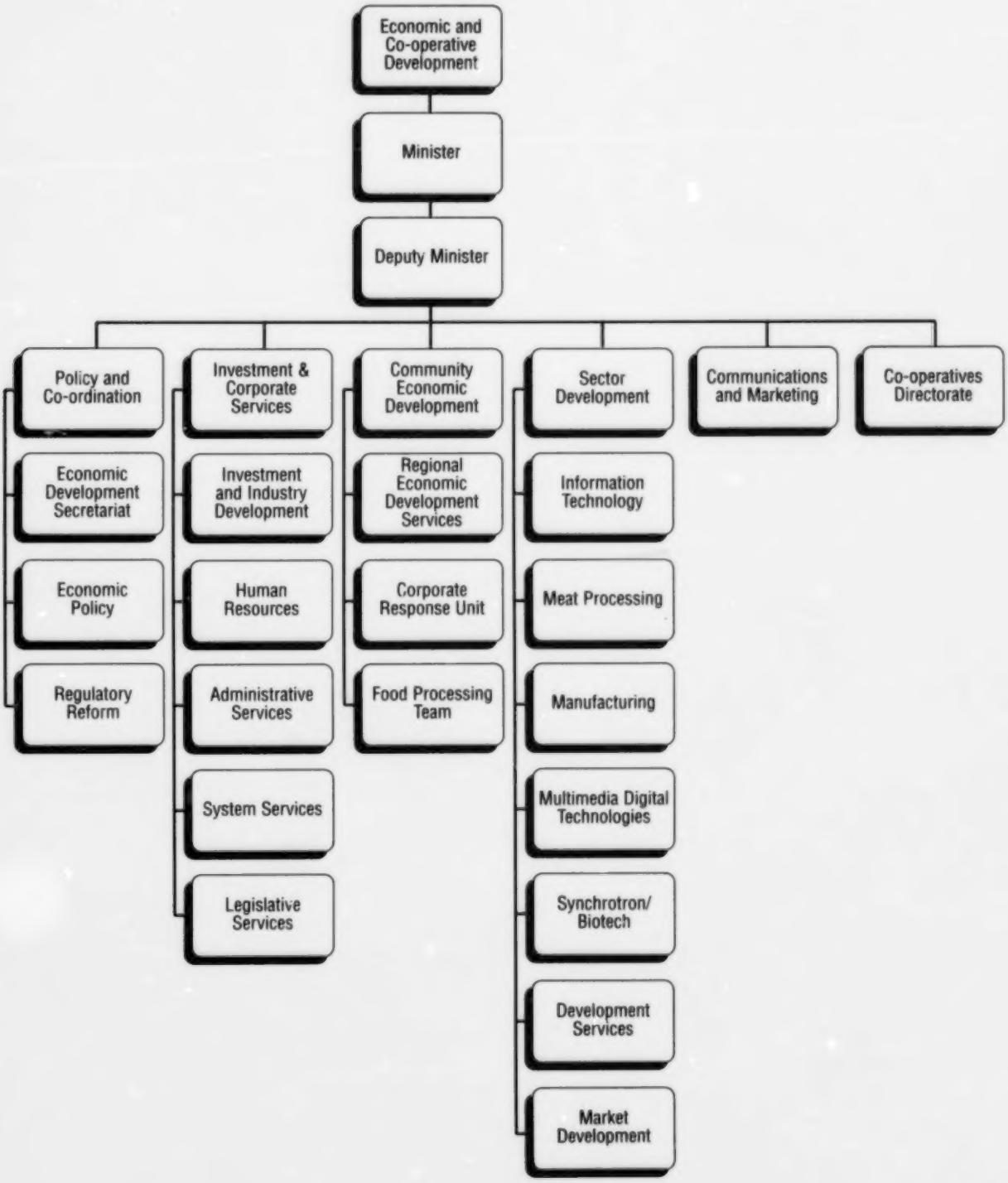
Internal Organization as of March 31, 1998



Organization by Function

The department entered the 1998-99 fiscal year with a structure aligned to support key economic sectors and provincial economic directions, as reflected in a refocused *Partnership for Growth* strategy. The relatively flat organizational structure consisted of four divisions, one directorate and one branch reporting directly to the deputy minister.

As noted elsewhere, the department embarked on a major reassessment of its organizational structure and announced a new structure in July 1998. The new structure was designed to create a stronger service delivery to clients and strengthen the department's policy analysis role.

Policy and Co-ordination

The division added new resources in economic and strategic planning during the course of the year. At the start of the year the division was providing central government support to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Development (CCED). Government restructuring in September 1998 resulted in CCED being renamed the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, with the support function being relocated in the Cabinet Planning Unit at Executive Council.

Operations

This new division encompassed most of the functions of the former Community Economic Development and Sector Development Divisions. The division assumed responsibility for the department's eight regional offices and the sector business specialists now housed in the new Business Development Unit. The investment and immigration programs housed in the former Investment and Corporate Services Division were transferred to the new division's Program Development and Support Branch. The former Co-operatives Directorate also became part of Operations, as services to co-operatives were integrated throughout the department.

Information Technology Office

The Information Technology Office had been a branch in the former Sector Development Division but assumed full division status in 1998-99, reflecting the growing importance of information technology in government and the economy. The new office also assumed a co-ordination role for the government's Y2K preparedness efforts.

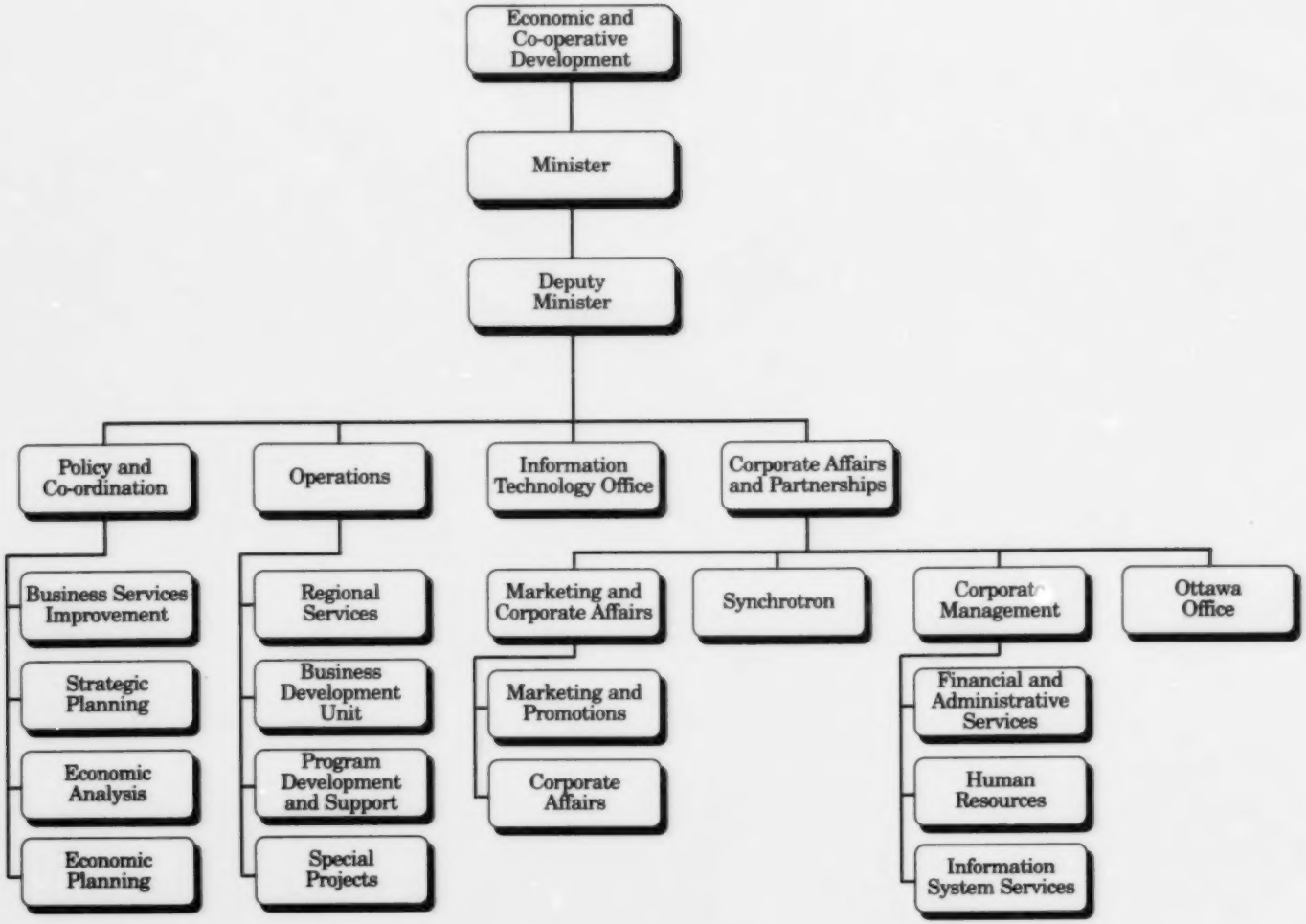
Corporate Affairs and Partnerships

This division is headed by the department's associate deputy minister and encompasses a number of the department's service areas. Corporate Management includes the Human Resources, Systems Services and Financial and Administrative Services functions of the former Investment and Corporate Services Division. The Marketing and Corporate Affairs Branch was renamed during the year to better reflect its twin communications streams. The division also manages the government's Ottawa Office and government interests in the synchrotron project.

Other Organizations Funded Through the Department Vote

The provincial government provides funding for other government-related economic development activities through the department's budget vote. In 1998-99, government and government-industry agencies receiving funds through this vote included: Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, Tourism Saskatchewan, the Office of Northern Affairs and the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. The amounts provided to SOCO, STEP, Tourism Saskatchewan and the Office of Northern Affairs are noted under the Financial Report contained in this document.

Internal Organization as of March 31, 1999



Policy and Co-ordination

The role of the Policy and Co-ordination Division is to develop economic policies for the department and the government. The division also provides the department and its minister with timely policy and planning services and economic information.

At the end of 1998-99 Policy and Co-ordination consisted of four branches: Economic Analysis, Economic Planning, Strategic Planning and Business Services Improvement.

Services and Activities

Policy and Co-ordination provides services and information in the following main categories:

- policy and program development;
- economic information production and presentation;
- inter-agency and inter-departmental relations;
- federal/provincial relations; and
- monitoring and co-ordination of key provincial and departmental issues.

Policy and Program Development

Policy and program development involves creating and implementing economic policies and strategies. During the year the division continued its coordination and implementation of initiatives under the province's economic strategy, *Partnership for Growth* (PFG). With many of the initiatives complete, the division focused on developing a number of new initiatives that fit within the context of the provincial economic strategy. These included new initiatives in forest sector development and provincial research and development.

The division continued to support the work of the Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (PACE). During the year in review PACE focused on such issues as competitiveness and Aboriginal economic development.

The government acted on a number of recommendations from PACE's 1997 Competitiveness Report. The spring 1998 and 1999 budgets focused, for example, on sales and income tax reductions and targeted tax measures, such as introduction of a new research and development tax credit.

During the fiscal year, the division undertook environmental scans and updates for ten key industry sectors, including sector overviews and information on key organizations and opportunities. This work contributed to an updated overall assessment of Saskatchewan's competitive advantages.

The division conducted a comparative assessment of taxes in Saskatchewan and other provinces during the reporting period. This work in particular assessed the utilization of the scientific research and experimental development tax credit and identified industry issues regarding the tax credit. It led to later work in developing a competitiveness analytical model.

On Aboriginal economic development, the division consulted with First Nation and Métis organizations on their economic planning issues and priorities. These consultations led to draft terms of reference for a provincial Aboriginal economic strategy. With Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population increasing rapidly, government economic strategies must meet the challenges of ensuring full participation by all people in a growing Saskatchewan economy.

The division conducted a strategic planning exercise for the biotechnology sector, exploring identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and recommendations for further development. The division also participated in complementary biotechnology development planning activities involving Western Canadian provinces.

During the reporting period, the division led the development and analysis of policy on new generation co-operatives, and played a key role in the creation of *The New Generation Co-operatives Act, 1999* and *Regulations*. This legislation, which would be introduced and passed in 1999-2000, provides the legal framework and governance rules for these co-operatives, and offers them new capitalization mechanisms such as access to non-member capital and availability of non par value shares.

Another activity of the division during the year was the development of a balanced scorecard methodology for identifying and ranking economic development policies and initiatives. The scorecard is a tool to help address one of the problems all governments face: that of choosing between alternate economic policies which set directions, and the actions that will achieve the goals and objectives that those policies envision.

Economic Information Production and Presentation

The division provided timely program, policy and economic information critical to efficient decision-making. Staff produced monthly labour force reports, six economic indicator reports, two summaries of private sector forecasts, five economic impact analyses of economic development projects, and a number of other statistical and analytical reports on the provincial economy.

Inter-agency and inter-departmental relations

Research and Development

In 1998-99 division staff and officials from Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training began a process to develop a provincial research and development (R&D) policy framework. The department obtained government and external stakeholder input into the process, co-chaired an interdepartmental meeting on R&D, and received a consultant's report on the state of Saskatchewan R&D.

Research and development was also an agenda item at meetings of economic development ministers from the four western provinces and two territories. The division acted as lead resource on the item, co-ordinating development of a discussion paper for consideration of the ministers.

Forestry

Policy and Co-ordination completed a comprehensive assessment of Saskatchewan's forest sector, in conjunction with officials from Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and the Office of Northern Affairs. This assessment included determining Saskatchewan's options for forest sector development and expansion, reviewing the government and industry's forest management policies, and identifying supply and cost of timber from Crown lands.

Federal-Provincial Relations

Policy and Co-ordination continues to identify and work with federal departments to address matters of importance to Saskatchewan's economy. The division also participates in many federal-provincial working groups in such areas as small business and entrepreneurship, science and technology, and labour market information.

During the year the division also assisted the Office of Northern Affairs and Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in the development of a potential federal-provincial agreement on northern development.

During the year Policy Division was responsible for implementing a major federal-provincial agreement. The Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) is a four-year, $40 million fund designed to help build the province's capacity for economic growth through innovation. WEPA is administered jointly by Western Economic Diversification Canada for the federal government and Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the provincial government.

WEPA provides funding for projects that significantly increase Saskatchewan's innovative capacity in: economic infrastructure; tourism; export and marketing; and rural and northern economic development. The agreement was signed in July 1998, and during 1998-99, five projects were approved for $8,606,174 in commitments. A total of $3,750,000 was disbursed during 1998-99.

Specific initiatives approved during the year included:

- $6 million for the Petroleum Technology Research Centre to be located in the Regina Research Park adjacent to the University of Regina;
- $2 million for the Estey Centre for Law and Economics in International Trade to be located at the University of Saskatchewan;
- $25,000 for the Lloydminster Heavy Oil Interpretive Centre; and
- $250,000 for a new Multi-Party Training Plan designed to increase Aboriginal participation in Saskatchewan's mining industry.

Division staff co-ordinated the department's input into the Western and Annual Premiers' Conferences and several federal-provincial-territorial meetings of ministers and deputy ministers. In December 1998 the division helped organize a meeting in Regina of economic development ministers from the four western provinces and two territories, and provided input into a follow-up meeting in Edmonton in March 1999.

The division continued to represent Saskatchewan on the Working Group on Investment, established under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). The working group completed a number of assignments required under the Investment Chapter of the AIT,

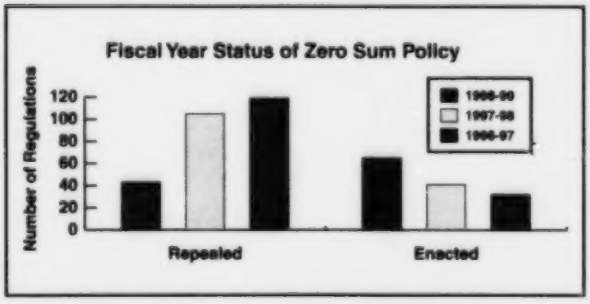
and made progress on identifying improvements and clarifications to the Code of Conduct on Investment, as requested by the premiers at their 1997 conference. A series of recommendations to enhance the code were put forward to internal trade ministers for their consideration.

Monitoring and Co-ordination of key provincial and departmental issues

Regulatory Reform

In September 1997, Executive Council transferred responsibility for the government's Regulatory Reform Initiative to the department. Officials of the department have been directed by Cabinet to review all regulations by the year 2005, and reduce the number of regulations by approximately 25 per cent. Government adopted a "zero sum" policy, which means that if new regulations are enacted, they should, if possible, replace existing regulations. Cabinet's review in September 1997 also resulted in an emphasis on reducing regulations and "red tape" for small and medium-sized businesses while maintaining protection for the public, workers, and the environment.

The number of regulations has decreased from 809 (April 1996) to 682 (March, 1999), a 15 per cent reduction over that period. Achieving the 25 per cent reduction target will mean strict adherence to the zero sum policy. Cumulatively in the last three fiscal years, the number of regulations repealed is nearly double the number enacted. The graph below displays the progress made in regards to this policy.



With respect to the review of regulations, all provincial departments, agencies and Crowns in the 1998-99 fiscal year reviewed a total of 129 regulations. Cumulatively to date, over half of all provincial regulations have been reviewed.

During 1998-99, government departments, agencies and Crown corporations worked with businesses on over thirty regulatory initiatives. The immediate saving to businesses was more than $300,000.

The division received a sector study in June 1998 on regulatory issues affecting the hotel industry. This study indicated that hotel operators can be affected by 22 different regulations and be subject to 12 different licensing and 10 separate reporting requirements. A discussion paper was subsequently developed detailing these concerns. The Hotels Association of Saskatchewan has reviewed the paper and identified a number of priority issues. During 1999-2000, the division intends to work with the Hotels Association to address the specific issues which, for example, include occupational health and safety issues, inspection processes, and remittance of taxes.

The Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan (ECAS) is concerned with the current processes of issuing restricted electrical licenses. As the result of a detailed discussion paper prepared by the Business Services Improvement Branch, Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing is co-chairing a committee with the ECAS to review restricted electrical licenses. To date, this multi-stakeholder committee has met twice and further meetings, along with finalization of a report, are expected to occur in 1999-2000.

During 1998-99, department officials developed a discussion paper and workshop on alternatives to regulations. Staff conducted seven sessions of the workshop with various government departments, using current-day work examples of the participants with regulations and regulatory issues. Feedback from the workshops was positive.

In addition to working with various industry associations and as part of regulatory reform efforts, officials in Business Services Improvement Branch identified and addressed business red tape irritants at the firm specific level. Examples of issues brought forward ranged from a tire dealer questioning requirements under the new *Scrap Tire Management Regulations* to a motor vehicle dealer concerned with the distribution of dealer plates. The specific irritants are a valuable source of data to guide future efforts to reduce red tape and paper burden for business.

The Strategic Initiatives Fund

The government's Strategic Initiatives Fund supports research and development infrastructure and activities that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities. Support is targeted at the development of technologies that are required for Saskatchewan industries to remain efficient and

competitive and the development of technologies which will lead to new higher value products, processes and uses for Saskatchewan products.

Strategic Initiatives Fund projects are evaluated and ranked on the following criteria: economic impact assessment, industry support, financial viability, project feasibility, and availability of other public funds.

Applications are also considered as a result of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) program. Under CFI the province agrees in principle to match federal dollars to a maximum of 40 per cent of the total project cost. Existing grants such as the fund are to be sourced to the greatest extent possible for the matching provincial dollars.

In 1998-99, a total of $3,531,394 went to new projects. Of those funds, $714,588 was allocated to CFI approved projects.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Development

Early in 1998-99, the Economic Development Secretariat to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Development (CCED) was located within the division. The secretariat provided general administrative and decision analysis support for CCED, including co-ordination of the committee's agenda as well as detailed evaluations of decision items.

In September 1998, due to government restructuring, CCED was renamed the Cabinet Committee on the Economy and the support function for it was relocated to the Cabinet Planning Unit at Executive Council.

1999-2000 Objectives

During 1999-2000, Policy and Co-ordination will:

- continue to develop and implement a renewed economic development strategy for the province, co-ordinating related strategic activities and building on sectoral opportunities;
- undertake strategies and activities supporting a sectoral approach to economic development and job creation;
- continue the implementation of the WEPA, and assist in the development of other federal-provincial economic initiatives;
- work on co-operative approaches in economic development with other departments, agencies, governments, the business community and economic stakeholders, particularly in policy areas relating to community and regional economic development, co-operatives, taxation, transportation, research and development, Aboriginal economic development, trade and investment;
- provide economic information, analysis and advice in support of departmental objectives and priorities;
- continue inter-departmental co-ordination to develop and expand the forest industry by a wood volume review to support additional primary sector growth plus reviews of value-added forest development, a forest development centre and agroforestry strategies; and
- partner with First Nations and Métis organizations as well as the federal government to build on the proposed Aboriginal economic development strategy.

1999-2000 Objectives – Regulatory Reform

The division through its Business Services Improvement Branch will continue to focus on addressing business red tape and regulatory irritants. The branch will initiate and maintain an ongoing dialogue with both individual businesses and their associations for the purposes of identifying and resolving business issues. During 1999-2000, the branch plans to develop informational bulletins, for targeted business sectors, which would summarize and simplify the regulatory requirements to which they must adhere.

For more information contact:

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Operations Division

The Operations Division is responsible for the delivery of department programs and services that encourage the growth of businesses and co-operatives. It accomplishes this through four branches or units:

- The Regional Services Branch, which comprises the department's eight regional offices and which provides general advice to businesses and co-operatives and support to Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs);
- The Business Development Unit, which works with growth firms and sectors, and helps co-ordinate government investment attraction initiatives;
- The Program Development and Support Branch, which co-ordinates the planning, delivery and administration of department programs; and
- The Special Projects Branch, which works on high-priority and generally inter-sectoral initiatives.

Regional Services Branch

The Regional Services Branch provides business and co-operative development support through assessment, information, pathfinding and referral services. It encourages job creation by Saskatchewan's business community by co-ordinating and delivering a comprehensive small business support system in partnership with the public and private sectors. The branch also works with community leaders to support and strengthen community economic development in the province.

The branch's services are delivered through the department's eight regional offices. The TransCanada Region consists of the areas served by offices in Regina, Estevan, Moose Jaw and Swift Current. The Yellowhead Region takes in the areas that the Saskatoon, North Battleford, Prince Albert and Yorkton offices serve.

Throughout the fiscal year, the branch was responsible for:

- providing and managing services for business development, co-operative development and community economic development;
- assessing value-added client business needs and matching those needs with suppliers of business programs and services;
- supporting the development of Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) and assisting them in increasing their service capacity; and
- supporting the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), a federal/provincial partnership, in its efforts to provide a "single window" information service to businesses in Saskatchewan.

Branch achievements during 1998-99 are grouped under four categories: information and services, small and medium enterprises, partnerships, and regional economic development authorities.

Information and Services

One of the branch's goals is to ensure that information, assessment and pathfinding services are provided to support small business and co-operative development in the province.

During 1998-99, the branch handled 14,863 requests for business and co-operative information and assistance. It also continued to develop, update and distribute small business information, directories and databases. These included a series of 82 business and co-operative "how to" resource materials handouts, 48 Kinds-of-Business resources, a cash flow planning model and the *Directory of Business Associations*.

Small and Medium Enterprises

Another major branch activity is working with value-added small and medium enterprises (SMEs), ranking them in terms of growth potential and providing assistance as required. On this task each regional office is responsible for a specific area of the province. During the fiscal year, regional staff maintained regular contact with local businesses, helped identify firms with growth potential, and assessed their needs to determine what help they required from the department or other sources.

Partnerships

The branch works to identify partners and assist them in leveraging resources and pursuing opportunities that enhance wealth and job creation. The branch encourages partners to provide business training and education, and to assist in the development of economic development groups and REDAs.

One of the branch's main partnership activities is the five-year-old Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), jointly funded and managed by the department and the federal government. The Saskatoon-based centre supports Saskatchewan business development and entrepreneurial processes. As the hub of the "single window" network, the centre provides user-friendly information to aid business decisions, plus information on government programs and services.

During 1998-99 the centre handled 24,118 requests for business information. It also accounted for 385,618 Internet hits on its *Business Information System* (BIS) and made 1,630 contacts through promotional efforts at trade shows, and through presentations and tours of the CSBSC.

During the reporting period, the CSBSC continued to work on its regionalization initiative to improve delivery of services in locations outside of Saskatoon. Regionalization involves creation of a network of regional or satellite offices to extend centre services and make information and walk-in services readily available in smaller communities. The CSBSC established four pilot sites during the year in Tisdale, Swift Current, Yorkton and Regina. Another 12 access sites were under development.

A "single window" approach to business information depends on partnerships with other agencies involved in economic development. An infrastructure of such agencies has been developed, and includes provincial and federal departments, business associations, REDAs and various community economic development organizations, selected chambers of commerce, banks and credit unions. There are more than 300 of these partnership arrangements, with partners acting as distribution points for small business information.

Working with partner organizations, branch staff provided resources — either their expertise, materials or both — to various training programs, such as seminars on starting a business and cash flow model training. Staff served on a number of boards and committees for business development and training initiatives. These initiatives included the Self Employment Assistance Program, the JobStart/Future Skills Program, and the One-Stop Business Registration pilot project. Staff also helped in the development of business enterprise centres, including in some cases co-location of department offices within those centres.

Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs)

The REDA initiative was introduced in 1993 as a key government economic development initiative.

REDAs offer a co-ordinated, co-operative approach to provincial economic development. Their membership consists of communities, rural municipalities, businesses, co-operatives and First Nations. Those partners pool their resources to support job and wealth creation within regions that they define.

At the start of 1998-99, 22 REDAs were in various stages of development. Six new REDAs were established during the year, bringing the total to 28. The new REDAs were:

- Yellowhead REDA (main communities — Langenburg, Churchbridge)
- Regina REDA (Regina, Lumsden, Strasbourg)
- Cypress Hills REDA (Maple Creek, Shaunavon, Eastend)
- Prairie to Pine REDA (Meota, St. Walburg)
- Big Gully REDA (Maidstone, Lashburn)
- Battlefords REDA (Battlefords)

The branch offers a range of organizational and professional services to existing and emerging REDAs, including services that increase their economic development capacity. During the year the branch introduced a number of new resources and training tools for REDAs. They included:

- the REDA Enhancement Fund, for projects that strengthen regional infrastructure and build economic development capacity; in 1998-99, 77 projects were approved involving 26 REDAs;
- the REDA Youth Employment Initiative, which resulted in term employment on business projects for 15 young business graduates or students in 14 REDAs;
- the REDA Board Governance Training program on the roles and responsibilities of board members in community economic development; and
- Small Business Counsellor Accreditation Training for REDA economic development officers.

A highlight of the year was the second REDA Conference, which the branch organized in mid-February, coincident with the first-ever "REDA Week in Saskatchewan". The conference provided an opportunity for all REDAs to come together to enhance partnerships and training and to facilitate networking. Twenty-seven of the existing 28 REDAs had representatives in attendance.

Survey results indicate that the REDA representatives found the conference helped them with new ideas for their regional economic development strategies and operations. Seventy-five per cent of attendees felt the conference achieved its partnership, training and networking objectives.

REDA Activities in 1998-99

During the fiscal year, REDAs provided a variety of services to businesses and communities in their regions. They also undertook economic development initiatives with the ongoing assistance of branch staff. REDA services are typically grouped into seven categories:

Co-ordination Services

REDAs co-ordinate the activities of various organizations and entities within regions in order to achieve collaboration and synergy while reducing duplication. Examples include:

- co-ordinating "Employment Services Offices" and "Summer Youth Employment Centres" in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada;
- co-ordinating regional marketing initiatives such as development of web pages, profiles and brochures for member communities and regions;
- developing "Local Labour Market Partnerships" to deal with labour market challenges;
- co-ordinating trade shows and fairs; and
- co-ordinating and partnering with other REDAs on special initiatives.

Organizational Development and Planning Services

REDAs help increase the capacity of economic development organizations within their areas. Examples include:

- conducting partnership planning for regional enterprise centres;
- establishing and operating Small Business Loans Associations;
- establishing regional inventories of recreational opportunities and facilities;
- establishing partnerships with First Nations; and
- establishing satellite offices in member communities.

Education and Training Services

REDAs ensure the presence of educational services to meet the needs of the regional business and economic development communities. Examples include:

- developing "training needs assessments" for their regions; and
- hosting and delivering seminars on various topics such as business development, marketing, patenting, hospitality training, bed & breakfast, Year 2000, customer service, assessing business opportunities, financial planning and ISO 9000; often in partnership or on a contract basis with organizations like Tourism Saskatchewan, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan, Human Resources Development Canada, Business Development Bank of Canada, regional colleges and community futures development corporations.

Information Services

REDAs work to ensure entrepreneurs, businesses and other groups can access the information they require. Examples include:

- administering and co-ordinating Community Access sites (public Internet access);
- developing and maintaining resource libraries, with many REDAs applying to become Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre 'regionalization' sites; and
- assisting business clients with business planning, provision of business information, identifying opportunities and sourcing financial assistance.

Research and Development Services

REDAs identify economic development and business opportunities within their regions. Examples include:

- developing specific initiatives such as research and development centres and sector-specific opportunity assessments;
- conducting market consumer research, feasibility studies and market opportunity studies;
- conducting labour market and training research and regional needs assessments; and
- designing and planning activities for downtown rejuvenation/redevelopment.

Promotion and Marketing Services

REDAs promote their regions for investment attraction and business retention purposes. Examples include:

- developing and publishing directories of regional business listings;
- developing and publishing brochures, profiles and pamphlets;
- promoting regional tourism (e.g., providing "placemats" to area restaurants marketing local tourism, advertising in Tourism Saskatchewan publications);
- promoting local/regional businesses through events such as business awards events, shop locally initiatives, and trade shows; and
- developing regional profiles to attract investment to sector clusters.

Project Management Services

REDAs manage and implement specific regional projects and initiatives. Examples include:

- co-ordinating meetings, recording and distributing minutes, acting as liaison, carrying out surveys and planning feasibility studies with various groups such as agricultural producers, forestry organizations, and regional waste and transportation initiatives;
- managing regional and local tourism projects;
- developing enterprise centres and/or Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre regionalization sites;
- conducting feasibility studies; and
- involving themselves in such specific and highly visible projects as the Saskatoon Tapping Industrial Potential (STIP) program, Weyburn Wheat Festival, snowmobile trails in northeast Saskatchewan, Wilkie Spa, Moose Jaw/Regina Industrial Corridor Study, RCMP Heritage Interpretive Centre and Regina Airport Authority.

1999-2000 Branch Objectives:

- Increase the capacity of existing REDAs to undertake business development by providing services and resources to them, including new business development tools, and training initiatives for all REDA boards and professional staff.
- Provide and manage services for business, co-operative and community economic development. Continue to focus efforts on assessing value-added client business needs and matching those needs with suppliers of business programs and services.
- Continue to support the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, the federal/provincial "single window" information service to business, and encourage CSBSC regionalization by developing a network of regional access sites.
- Provide services and resources to support the capacity of the new Neighborhood Development Organizations to undertake programming in inner-city neighbourhoods in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.
- Continue to provide the department with intelligence on regional economic developments, issues and support services.

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Business Development Unit

The Business Development Unit specializes in enhancing the growth and diversity of value-added and knowledge-based industries in Saskatchewan. The unit identifies areas for growth, expansion and investment, and participates with other partners in the development of industry-enhancing projects, related support infrastructure and innovative services for value-added and knowledge-based business/co-operative sectors. The unit also leads provincial investment attraction and procurement initiatives.

The unit accomplishes its goals by:

- providing the department and its business clients with specialized sectoral intelligence;
- working with the department's Policy Division and other departments and agencies to formulate and execute industrial sector development strategies;
- providing business counselling to firms considering investment in Saskatchewan;
- working with government, industry and academic partners to facilitate new research and development and support infrastructure;
- providing specialized pathfinding services to industry clients;
- providing management counselling to local firms on quality, productivity, marketing, strategic business planning, best manufacturing practices, new technology and innovative production techniques/processes;
- providing liaison and third party mediatory services between industry and other government departments/agencies to resolve issues affecting businesses; and
- maintaining a series of databases on manufacturing, construction and key sectors of the Saskatchewan economy.

The unit is organized by priority sectors with each business development manager being responsible for one or more sectors.

1998-99 Achievements

Achievements of the Business Development Unit during 1998-99 are grouped under four categories: investment attraction, infrastructure development, industrial development, and client service.

Investment Attraction

During the fiscal year, staff in the unit:

- continued its liaison with industry, community and government partners on activities leading to the establishment of the NATO Flight Training Centre in Moose Jaw;
- assisted through various administrative and marketing activities in securing the $174 million Synchrotron project;
- secured $100,000 in R&D funding from the Canadian Space Agency for a local company;
- co-organized a major investment attraction mission to Europe that resulted in effectively promoting Saskatchewan's agricultural biotechnology strengths and which led to a number of contacts and inquiries on potential new industries and partnerships in the province;
- established an industry liaison committee for R&D spending and investment attraction with Canada's research-based pharmaceutical industry; and
- participated in investment attraction missions to Toronto, Winnipeg, and Baltimore.

Infrastructure Development

In this area, unit staff:

- assisted the province's apparel and textile industry by working with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, the Apparel and Textile Association of Saskatchewan (ATAS) and SIAST to complete an industry needs assessment, implement a technical training program, and develop preliminary plans for an Apparel Technology Resource Centre;
- provided support to the University of Saskatchewan — guidance on funding options and in business planning and feasibility analysis — for various technology infrastructure initiatives and facilities;

- explored the potential of SIAST creating a division to address the potential needs of training in the aviation industry with specific focus on aircraft maintenance engineers and ground-based training for aircraft pilots; played a major role in getting Transport Canada, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, SIAST, and the Saskatchewan aviation private sector to agree to explore the needs and opportunities that might flow from the NATO Flight Training Centre in Moose Jaw; assisted in the subsequent development of a sector partnership component to the province's JobStart/Future Skills program; and
- partnered with the National Research Council (NRC) on various projects and explored options for expanding NRC's base of service in Saskatchewan.

Industrial Development

In the area of industrial development, the unit:

- sponsored and co-hosted with industry and university partners two workshops on developing entrepreneurial and management skills in the biotechnology sector to encourage growth in new start-ups;
- assisted in "The Flatland Culture Goes Global", a conference for exporting activities for Saskatchewan's cultural industries;
- worked as a facilitator with ATAS, Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (the JobStart/Future Skills program), and the Office of Northern Affairs to establish a technical training program for staff working at the Ile a la Crosse clothing factory owned by Sakitawak First Nation;
- partnered with the NRC to deliver an Applying Technology in Manufacturing seminar in April, 1998;
- partnered with the NRC, the Saskatchewan Research Council and the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association to lead the Applying Technology in Manufacturing Technical Tour 1999, a visit by Saskatchewan manufacturers to Ontario and Quebec to view advanced manufacturing technologies and processes;
- developed provincial profiles for the metal manufacturing, biotechnology, apparel and textiles, advanced technology, and mining sectors;
- initiated and assisted in industry skills assessment studies for the farm machinery industry in conjunction with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and industry associations;
- developed and conducted various surveys in the biotech, apparel and textiles, and metal manufacturing industries; assisted Industry Canada and the Standards Council of Canada in developing an ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 survey for Canadian companies;
- advanced Saskatchewan's position nationally on key industries through membership on the Agricultural Technologies and Equipment, Aerospace and Defence, and Environmental Industries National Sector Teams;
- researched and proposed a position on industry concerns around the federal Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax credit program;
- led and co-ordinated provincial activities regarding renewal of the Canadian Biotechnology Strategy;
- developed a priority list of companies in the province's key industrial sectors;
- worked with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food to provide information and promote the province as a location for straw board plants;
- worked with the Saskatchewan Food Processors Association, the Saskatchewan Neutraceutical Network and other government partners to support growth of the food industry through development of strategic plans for the sector, identification of the sector's training needs, and promotion of the sector's products;
- secured contracts in excess of $17 million for Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services in areas such as: sheet metal enclosures, electronic assemblies, mill work, civil/structural engineering, building construction materials and services, architectural services, Local Area Networks (LANs), computers, plastics components, machined parts, stamped/heat treated parts, and software; and
- ensured contracting by the Department of National Defence (DND) of considerable testing and evaluation services to PAMI, which will result in considerable supply opportunities and a formal MOU to be signed in late 1999 between DND and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) to expand on the work being done at the Humboldt station.

Client Service

During the reporting period, unit staff:

- provided guidance and support to various industry associations in the province's key industry sectors;

- maintained and administered the Saskatchewan Made Program, the Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide, the Major Projects Inventory and other sectoral databases;
- provided professional advice to Saskatchewan companies on quality management and standards-related matters, including technical requirements, testing, certification and registration;
- delivered presentations on quality and international standards at industry forums and educational institutions;
- articulated positions on standards at various national and international forums, and actively participated in the National Standards System through membership on various committees and working groups including the Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee of the Standards Council of Canada;
- assisted Policy Division and other departments with development of a new forestry strategy; and
- provided continuing support to Innovators in the Schools and the Canadian Science Fair program.

1999-2000 Unit Objectives

- Establish strategic sector plans in co-operation with the department's Policy Division and other agencies to promote industry development, diversification and growth.
- Identify strategic research and development opportunities and their potential for commercialization, technology transfer or other support services.
- Organize major training events and/or other collaborative projects to enhance the technical and managerial skills and competitiveness of businesses in Saskatchewan's value-added and knowledge-based sectors.
- Develop and regularly update a pathfinding "tool kit" for the unit which includes a comprehensive inventory of relevant inter-agency programs, other support services, funding mechanisms, private capital markets, major regulatory processes and trade issues which will be of interest and/or concern to each key sector.
- Enhance working relationships with other related branches, departments and agencies across all levels of governments in order to clarify roles, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize resources in support of key sectors and projects.
- Help Saskatchewan companies increase their business in local markets, through identification of federal and provincial procurement opportunities and other opportunities within the province.
- Promote participation by Saskatchewan companies in trade and export activities, and liaise with provincial federal trade officials to enhance awareness of all trade initiatives, programs, missions, trade shows and delegations which may be of interest to companies in each sector.
- Profile selected sectors and industries from a world perspective, identify investment attraction opportunities within respective industries and proactively pursue these opportunities.
- Promote emerging developments in each sector to create a positive investor psychology within Saskatchewan.
- Spearhead collaborative efforts with other departments, agencies and stakeholders on business retention and expansion activities in Saskatchewan's value-added and knowledge-based sectors.

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Program Development and Support Branch

The Program Development and Support Branch helps develop, manage and deliver the department's programs and services for business, co-operatives and community economic development. It consists of three units: Regional Programs, Co-operative and Community Economic Development, and Investment Services.

Regional Programs

The Regional Programs Unit provides support to the TransCanada and Yellowhead regions in planning, developing and delivering training and resource materials for business, co-operative and community development programs and services. The unit helps develop and deliver activities promoting business and co-operatives during Co-operatives Week, Small Business Week, REDA Week, and other regional events. It also manages the financial, reporting, and human resource aspects for the Operations Division, and manages and supports the development and delivery of the federal/provincial agreement to operate the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre.

During 1998-99, the unit administered the matching grant funding to the province's 28 REDAs. REDAs received a total of $1,321,494 in Phase I and Phase II matching grant funding. Under the REDA Enhancement Fund, 26 REDAs received $621,809 in matching grant funding for 77 economic development projects. The REDA Youth Employment Program placed and trained 15 candidates in 14 different REDA locations — total program funding was $160,310. An evaluation of this latter program found that the training and employment opportunities had been beneficial to both the youth candidates and the REDAs in enhancing regional business development, and that three youth candidates had obtained permanent employment with REDAs.

Co-operative and Community Economic Development

One of the department's mandates is to strengthen the province's socio-economic base by promoting and supporting the use of the co-operative governance and ownership structure, principles and business practices. During the year, the department met that mandate by integrating and expanding its co-operative services throughout the organization.

In the reporting period, the department increased staffing resources from two to seven in the regional offices and introduced two new funding programs, the Co-operative Development Assistance Program and the Neighbourhood Development Organization Initiative, while maintaining key areas of support in the department's policy, programming and communication areas. The result has been enhanced support to the co-operative sector in promotion, education, co-operative development and the development of New Generation Co-operatives legislation.

During 1998-99, the department's co-operative activities were grouped into six general categories:

- co-operative sector relations and liaison;
- co-operative development and diversification projects;
- development of new co-operatives;
- co-operative models for community development and community economic development;
- resource material, research and promotion; and
- monitoring of the legislative and regulatory environment affecting co-operatives.

Co-operative Sector Relations and Liaison

The department worked to improve and strengthen positive relations between the government and all levels of the co-operative sector.

It kept the co-operative sector informed about current government polices, issues and initiatives, and worked to increase government awareness of the needs, interests and concerns of Saskatchewan's major co-operatives, the broad co-operative sector, communities, and other stakeholder organizations involved in co-operative education and promotion.

Other activities in sector relations and liaison included:

- maintaining liaison with the co-operative sector through non-voting membership on the Saskatchewan Region Council of the Canadian Co-operative Association;
- maintaining liaison with the co-operative sector through membership on the management board of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan;

- co-ordinating meetings between senior management of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and deputy ministers of selected departments;
- co-ordinating meetings between co-operative sector officials and senior government officials to increase awareness and communications at the operational level between government and the co-operative sector;
- meeting with representatives of the co-operative sector to explore ways the provincial government and co-operative sector can work together on co-operative development;
- continuing support for the letter of understanding between the Department of Education and the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association concerning the inclusion of co-operative content in school curricula, and co-operative sector representation on advisory committees;
- participating in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Senior Officials Responsible for Co-operatives meeting; and
- co-ordinating meetings and providing information for the visits of two international delegations.

Co-operative Development and Diversification Projects

The department provided advice and support to Saskatchewan's developed and emerging co-operatives to assist them in their pursuit of development opportunities that support their economic growth and diversification and that of the province.

Part of the support centered on application of the new generation co-operative model by which producers can invest in agricultural value-added activity. Regional staff provided support to over 15 organizations of which three were incorporated (Canadian Classic Wild Boar Co-operative, Canadian Goat Marketing Co-operative, Silverwood Feedlot Co-operative Ltd.) and one was registered (North American Bison co-operative).

Staff also participated in ten one-day workshops on new generation co-operatives co-hosted by the Family Farm Foundation (this was a two year project, towards which the department provided $5,000 in assistance in 1998-99).

Development of New Co-operatives

A significant portion of the co-operatives budget was allocated towards co-operative development. The increased resources at the regional level enabled the department's co-operative development co-ordinators to better promote co-operation, co-operative ownership and governance and to better provide guidance, advice, support and referral services to groups and organizations forming co-operatives. Staff conducted research, carried out promotional activities through workshops, lectures, seminars and public meetings, and provided dedicated assistance to more than 70 groups at varying stages of development.

Ten new co-operatives were incorporated in the reporting period, with an additional 10 organizations awaiting approval from Saskatchewan Justice. These new co-operatives serve a variety of economic and social functions, and include housing, employment, recreation, feeder, agri-value, and day care co-operatives.

The Co-operative Development Assistance Program (CDAP) was piloted in 1998-99 as a means of encouraging new co-operative enterprises through funding for business analysis for not-for-profit and for-profit co-operatives. Two of the six applicants in 1998-99 were approved for assistance: one non-profit co-operative to conduct a feasibility study on its expansion and financing options and one for-profit co-operative to conduct a feasibility study for a retail store. Grants in 1998-99 totalled $14,589 for this program. The department will be reviewing and implementing changes to the program criteria for 1999-2000.

Co-operative Models for Community Development and Community Economic Development

The department continued to develop and implement co-operative solutions to challenges facing Saskatchewan communities such as rural re-structuring, inner-city poverty, and Aboriginal community development.

In 1998-99, the department and Saskatchewan Social Services implemented the Neighbourhood Development Organization (NDO) Initiative, directed at low-income inner-city neighbourhood organizations and groups. The departments gave organizational development and research assistance to these groups to undertake community and economic programming in their core neighbourhoods. Grants totalling $276,268 were provided to the three NDOs that formed:

- Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon;
- Riverbank Development Corporation in Prince Albert; and
- Community Action Alliance of Regina Co-operative.

The department continued to support the Saskatchewan Council on Community Development (SCCD) in its activities and provided funding of $5,000 to SCCD.

Resource Materials, Research and Promotion

The department developed resource materials for and about co-operatives, conducted research and promoted the sector and its accomplishments.

During the year, staff developed two fact sheets promoting co-operative development and updated ten existing fact sheets. The fact sheets are part of a series that explains co-operative principles, structure, organization, incorporation and operation.

In research, the department provided $75,000 to the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives to support its teaching, research and extension activities. Early in the fiscal year the centre released a major department- commissioned report, *The Social and Economic Importance of the Co-operative Sector in Saskatchewan*.

The main public awareness activities which department and sector staff worked on included:

- the Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards Program, an annual event which the department and the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association co-host to recognize the outstanding and innovative contributions that co-operative members and leaders have made to the sector and the province;
- Co-operatives Week, an annual provincial and national celebration in mid-October, highlighted by the Merit Awards ceremony and the week's launch event, the Co-operative Flag-Raising at the Legislative Building; and
- long-service recognition awards to Saskatchewan co-operatives marking 25, 40, 50, 75, 80, 90 and 100 years of operation.

Monitoring the Legislative and Regulatory Environment Affecting Co-operatives

During the fiscal year, the department worked with co-operatives and Saskatchewan Justice to maintain an effective legislative and regulatory environment that supports government and sector requirements, and to ensure that sufficient and appropriate information is available for efficient policy and program planning.

Activities included:

- providing advice and support to the government and Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan on amendments to credit union regulations as a result of *The Credit Union Act, 1998*;
- assisting in the development of New Generation Co-operatives legislation; and
- advising on the federal-provincial data management project to improve the gathering and maintenance of data about the co-operative sector.

Investment Services

The goal of the Investment Services Unit is to promote the development and growth of Saskatchewan businesses in ways designed to increase their equity financing from the community, employees or other individuals; and to create and maintain jobs.

In pursuing this goal, the unit is responsible for administering various activities including the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Program, Business Immigration Programs, and the Small Business Loans Association Program.

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation Program

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation (LSVCC) Program has three streams:

- Employee Investment — Employees are encouraged to invest in their firms. An employee-controlled investment fund is established which allows employees to make investments into the fund and then receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000. The fund then invests in the employer company for use in its business operations.
- Provincial Pool Funds — These funds encourage Saskatchewan residents to make equity investments into small and medium-sized Saskatchewan-based businesses. Through labour associations, broadly based investment corporations are established which issue shares to Saskatchewan residents. The investment corporations then invest those funds into a number of eligible Saskatchewan businesses. These provincial pool funds are governed by provincial legislation. Investors receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.
- Federal Pool Funds — These funds have the same objective as provincial pool funds. The difference is that federal funds are governed by the Canada Income Tax Act and investors receive provincial tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $3,500 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.

Department staff assist all the funds in becoming registered in the province. The department also issues both the provincial and federal tax credits to the investors.

In 1998-99, 11 employee funds, one provincial pool fund and two national pool funds were operating under the program. Following intensive work by its managers and department staff, the first-ever provincial pool fund was approved and marketed and eventually met its minimum opening requirements. On the federal side, one of the national pool funds was back in the market after taking a two-year break from raising funds. The other national pool fund had previously raised funds in Saskatchewan, but this was the first year that it was approved for provincial tax credits for its investors.

Highlights of activities under the LSVCC program are shown in the following chart:

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

	Fiscal 1998-99	Program to Date (April 89-March 99)
Employee Funds		
Number of Registrants Raising Funds	6	20
Funds Invested in Small Businesses	$529,616	$5,587,520
Amounts on which Tax credits Paid	$337,397	$3,564,441
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$60,764	$697,782
Jobs Created or Maintained (gross)	14	792
Provincial Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$2,827,027	$2,827,027
Number of Investors	756	756
Number of Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	0	0
Number of Companies Receiving Equity Funding	0	0
Amount of Funds Invested	0	0
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$433,960	$433,960
National Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$14,385,496	$117,477,784
Number of Investors	4,781	43,902
Number of Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	5	21
Number of Eligible Businesses Receiving Equity Funding	4	10
Amount of Funds Invested	$2,517,000	$39,600,000
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$2,132,790	$21,780,525

Business Immigration Programs

The goals of the Business Immigration Programs are to attract immigrant entrepreneurs who have specific business skills and experience, immigrants who can fill critical economic skill shortages, and offshore investment that will enhance economic development in the province. Staff in Business Immigration Programs are responsible for provincial management in the federal-provincial administration of the federal government's Immigrant Investor Program and Immigrant Entrepreneur Program. During the year, staff also developed and managed the Provincial Nominee Program.

During 1998-99, staff participated in two federal/provincial promotion and recruitment missions. The first was in October 1998 to South America. The second was to the United Kingdom and Europe in March of 1999 where staff promoted the Provincial Nominee Program at seminars, trade shows and in written advertisements. Follow-up visits to Saskatchewan by immigrants interested in relocating to Saskatchewan have already occurred. Staff have also developed programs for incoming immigrants to meet with sector specialists, regional economic development authorities and the business community to assist them with their decision to immigrate.

Staff participated in a number of federal/provincial working group meetings on selection criteria and promotion and recruitment during the year in an effort to assist with the development of policy and strategic planning at the federal level.

During 1998-99, permanent resident visas were issued to two entrepreneurs and four self-employed individuals destined to immigrate to Saskatchewan.

Provincial Nominee Program

In March 1998, a new Canada-Saskatchewan Immigration Agreement was signed. The Agreement made provision for the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), a two-year pilot project, implemented in December 1998. The PNP allows Saskatchewan to nominate during the pilot period up to 150 applicants who will have a significant impact in the province's key economic sectors. Eligibility is restricted to skilled workers and businesspersons. A significant component of the PNP is the ability of companies and industry associations to participate in the identification and attraction of these applicants.

A 1998 study elicited information from businesses, associations, government departments and agencies in order to identify critical skill shortages. Shortages identified included machinists, specialty welders, gear grinders, senior pressmen, hog barn managers, heavy-duty equipment mechanics and veterinarians for rural large-animal practices.

As of March 31, 1999, five skilled workers had been nominated, and one visa had been issued with the applicant becoming employed on March 1, 1999. Saskatchewan was the first to have a visa approved and issued of the provinces that have negotiated similar programs.

Immigrant Investor Program

The Immigrant Investor Program provides capital to small and medium-sized businesses in Saskatchewan, primarily in the areas of:

- manufacturing and processing;
- export services;
- destination tourism;
- new technology or expansion of existing technology;
- commercial water projects;
- enhancement of existing resource recovery and development projects; and
- real estate directly linked to the above.

In 1998-99, the department had two primary roles in the Immigrant Investor Program. The first was to attract to the province immigrant investors who then each invest $250,000 into the Saskatchewan Government Growth Fund (SGGF). The department was then responsible for approving share offerings proposed by SGGF and ensuring that investments made by existing Immigrant Investor Funds are eligible investments. In 1998-99, the department approved four new share offerings for SGGF including SGGF V, SGGF VI, SGGF VII & SGGF VIII.

During the year, the department also participated in a federal-provincial working group assigned to revise the Immigrant Investor Program. As a result of the working group's activities, the existing program was suspended on March 31, 1999 and a new program started on April 1, 1999. Existing funds such as SGGF were thus no longer able to raise new investments and will therefore be winding down their existing fund portfolios.

The new program will feature one Canada Fund (excluding Quebec) that will raise investments from the immigrants. These monies will then be distributed to participating provinces to be used for economic development purposes.

Small Business Loans Association Program

A Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) can be formed by the incorporation of four or more community-based interest groups: individuals, partnerships, co-operatives or corporations. In 1998-99, an approved SBLA could access an interest-free revolving line of credit of up to $50,000 from the department. The SBLA could then use this line of credit to make loans of up to $5,000 to new and existing businesses.

The objectives of the SBLA Program are:

- to provide business development opportunities to the non-traditional entrepreneur and to extend financing beyond the scope of traditional lenders to contribute to the success of the small entrepreneur; and
- to promote the growth and diversification of Saskatchewan by involving existing businesses and associations in assisting small start-up or existing businesses in their communities.

Department staff are responsible for:

- approving new SBLAs and providing final approval on client loans;
- disbursing funds to the SBLAs to then be disbursed to the small businesses;
- accepting and recording the principal payments from SBLAs on behalf of small businesses;
- registering loan security appropriately; and
- collecting on delinquent loans.

During the reporting year, the following program activity occurred:

Small Business Loans Association Program

	1998-1999	Program to Date (April 89-March 99)
Associations Approved	5	337
Active Associations	265	337
Approved Client Loans	505	5,899
Dollar Value of Approved Client Loans	$2,183,258	$26,352,135
Client Remittances	$2,170,604	$19,015,410
Total Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	2,027	—
Dollar Value of Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	$5,534,002	—
Jobs Created	419	6,931
Jobs Maintained	573	6,063
New Businesses Created	228	3,075

Youth PACE

During the year, the branch worked with officials of Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training to develop the goals and framework for the Youth Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (Youth PACE). The committee was structured along similar lines to the existing Provincial Action Committee on the Economy, but was limited to members ranging from 18 to 28 years of age. The premier and the ministers of the two departments announced the 19-member committee on March 11. Members of Youth PACE are mandated to identify and communicate to government the current priorities of young people, provide advice on the development of a provincial youth employment action plan, and work in partnership with government to develop new economic initiatives for young people.

1999-2000 Branch Objectives

Co-operative and Community Economic Development

During the new fiscal year, the department will continue its core activities and undertake new initiatives that focus on the development of new co-operatives in agri-value and non-traditional areas. The department plans to:

- complete a joint review of the co-operative work plan, including structures for and approaches to development of new co-operatives;
- evaluate and revise the guidelines for the Co-operative Development Assistance Program to ensure maximum benefits for growth of the co-operative sector;
- develop and implement evaluation mechanisms for the Neighbourhood Development Organization (NDO) initiative;
- promote and implement the application of the new generation co-operative model in Saskatchewan in conjunction with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and the co-operative sector, and assist in the development of new generation co-operative regulations;
- undertake to have the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives update its study of the economic impact of co-operatives on Saskatchewan;
- maintain liaison with the co-operative sector on government policies, programs, legislation and regulation pertaining to co-operatives and facilitate the presentation of the co-operative sector's needs, interests and concerns;
- promote and support co-operative sector accomplishments, and co-ordinate and support activities including the Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards Program, the Co-operative Flag-Raising Ceremony, and Co-operatives Week;
- monitor legislative and regulatory changes affecting co-operatives; and
- develop and distribute additional fact sheets in the ongoing series on co-operative governance and operations.

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation Program

The department will continue to offer the LSVCC Program and will specifically target the following objectives:

- Complete the development of a new database to track the funds raised, the tax credits issued and the investments made and redeemed;
- Repeal the Venture Capital Program and Small Business Incentives Program legislation (as all projects are now completed under these programs);
- Work with the administrators for each fund to ensure consistent reporting; and
- Analyze and evaluate new and existing funds.

Business Immigration Programs:

The department will continue to offer the services as described and will focus specifically on the following objectives:

- Develop and implement a business immigration promotion and recruitment plan;
- Work with the federal-provincial working group to plan and implement joint business immigration missions abroad;
- Develop and implement a plan to identify additional skill shortages and business opportunities to be recruited under the Provincial Nominee Program;
- Work with the federal government and other provinces to develop an evaluation framework for the Provincial Nominee Program; and
- Develop and implement a promotion program to increase awareness of the Provincial Nominee Program among Saskatchewan industry and other government departments.

Small Business Loans Association Program:

The department will continue to offer the SBLA Program and has increased the limits for the upcoming fiscal year. SBLAs will be able to access $100,000 from the department (up from $50,000) in order to make loans up to $10,000 (up from $5,000). Other objectives that will be specifically targeted include:

- continuing to monitor non-performing loans;
- recognizing SBLAs that have reached job creation milestones;
- developing an SBLA Manual/Handbook for use by SBLAs; and
- implementing regional information sessions with groups of SBLAs.

For more information, contact:

Program Development and Support Branch
Operations Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Regional Programs:
Telephone: (306) 787-7874
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Co-operative and Community Economic Development:
Telephone: (306) 787-0190
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Investment Services:
Telephone: (306) 787-8710
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Special Projects Branch

The Special Projects Branch devotes senior level attention to high-priority projects requiring focused activity and a definable outcome. Projects are usually intra/intersectoral in nature and require consultations and/or negotiations with senior government and industry representatives.

During 1998-99 the branch:

- developed a proposal identifying initiatives in the health field that could result in economic benefits;
- developed a plan and consensus for concluding the department's involvement in the Ukraine Business Centre project;
- negotiated an end to the department's involvement in the Software Technology Centre;
- provided operational assistance to the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association;
- assisted in securing funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada to ameliorate economic loss to Moose Jaw resulting from down-sizing of 15 Wing Moose Jaw;
- developed a consensus position to a proposal received from the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership;
- assisted Table Mountain Regional Park Authority to purchase land from Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management; and
- provided a major hog barn manufacturer with information on investing in Saskatchewan.

1999-2000 Branch Objectives

- Continue developing a strategy around collaboration on health economic development projects.
- Implement a neighbourhood economic development strategy and develop strategies for growth employment, which may include employment-based training, Aboriginal involvement, and employment incentives.
- Establish socio-economic indicators for broad-based economic and social planning.

For more information, contact:

Special Projects Branch
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-8178
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Information Technology Office

The Information Technology Office (ITO) began operations in 1998-99 as a full-fledged department division, after functioning as a branch in the department's former Sector Development Division. The expansion to division status was made to reflect the growing importance of information technology to government operations and the provincial economy.

Operating under the leadership of the Chief Information Officer for Saskatchewan, the ITO establishes and co-ordinates policies and programs that will use information technology to enhance public access, strengthen the government's ability to undertake electronic service delivery, and enable electronic commerce throughout the province.

During the reporting year, the government's Year 2000 (Y2K) Co-ordination Office was also established within the ITO. This central co-ordinating body monitors Y2K activities within government departments and agencies, identifies potential problem areas and facilitates Y2K communication activities across government. Responsibility for Y2K preparedness efforts remains, however, with individual government departments and agencies.

During 1998-99, the Information Technology Office was involved in:

- undertaking an extensive study to identify impediments to creation of a unified and secure government-wide data network;
- assuming responsibility for management of the central Government of Saskatchewan website;
- facilitating establishment of a government-wide management forum to share Y2K related information and develop policy as required;
- undertaking two major assessment studies into Y2K preparedness efforts across government departments and agencies; and
- conducting a series of Y2K awareness workshops for small businesses and organizations in communities across the province.

1999-2000 Objectives

- Improve public access to government services by encouraging departments and agencies to explore and expand electronic service delivery using the Internet and other available technologies. One of the major initiatives to be undertaken is a redevelopment project that will make the Government of Saskatchewan central website more client oriented.
- Help create an environment that will lead to the expansion of electronic commerce in Saskatchewan, thereby enabling Saskatchewan people and businesses to participate successfully in an increasingly information-based economy.
- Continue co-ordinating and facilitating the Y2K preparedness efforts of executive government, with a target of 100 per cent readiness prior to December 31, 1999.
- Develop a comprehensive Information Technology Policy Framework and Strategy, which will strengthen government's ability to use information and information technology to enhance the efficiency of government operations, and to assist Saskatchewan citizens in adapting to the global information-based economy.

For more information contact:

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Saskatchewan Economic and
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S4P 3V7

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Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Marketing and Corporate Affairs

The Marketing and Corporate Affairs Branch is responsible for the strategic communications, promotion and marketing activities of the department. Its role is to provide leadership on communications issues and to support government marketing efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and to attract businesses, industries and investment to Saskatchewan.

The 1998-99 goals of the Marketing and Corporate Affairs Branch included:

- increasing out-of-province awareness of the positive business climate and economic developments in Saskatchewan through heightened and more targeted marketing efforts;
- contributing to an increased awareness and confidence within the province of Saskatchewan's economic strengths, successes and opportunities;
- promoting general awareness of provincial strategies for economic development;
- increasing understanding of the economy and the linkages between economic and social benefits;
- increasing awareness of innovation as a source of economic growth; and
- creating awareness of department programs and services available to assist business development.

The activity level in the branch continued to be high and involved co-ordination with private businesses, other departments and other levels of government. Activities for 1998-99 fell into four broad areas in support of branch goals:

Creating Economic Confidence

The branch worked to develop confidence in Saskatchewan's economy by:

- producing and distributing four editions of the *Business Unlimited* quarterly, an insert in *Saskatchewan Business* magazine;
- publishing the monthly *Saskatchewan Economic News* (SEN) bulletin to provide news about economic indicators and significant economic development projects in all regions of the province.
- organizing, co-ordinating and advising on more than 90 public events to profile economic success stories in the private and public sectors;
- writing more than 100 speeches for the premier, minister, and designates to deliver to stakeholders;
- writing more than 100 news releases and feature stories on department programs and initiatives in the private and public sectors; and
- providing information and support for hundreds of media inquiries.

Image and Investment Promotion

The branch continued to promote Saskatchewan's economic renewal, growth prospects and investment opportunities among business and opinion leaders outside the province. Activities in this regard during the reporting period included:

- reviewing the department website and conducting a major update;
- undertaking major promotion of the Saskatchewan Business Ambassador Program, an initiative that provides business people travelling out of province with material to market Saskatchewan's business advantages;
- developing new marketing materials, such as folders, brochures and fact sheets;
- planning and co-ordinating opportunities for the minister and/or premier to speak to out-of province media about opportunities in Saskatchewan;
- helping to arrange out-of-province venues for the minister and/or premier to speak to business or opinion leaders;
- preparing feature articles and editorial material for trade and business publications on such subjects as the general state of the economy and agricultural biotechnology;
- providing communications support to department staff at trade shows;
- providing background and feature stories to out-of-province specialty and trade publications;
- producing articles and feature stories for various in-province publications;
- co-ordinating promotional activities around various special weeks including Co-operatives Week, Small Business Week, and REDA Week; and
- handling inquiries from the public.

Supporting Department Programs And Initiatives

The branch increased awareness of department programs and initiatives through production and distribution of print materials and selective use of advertising. Staff also co-ordinated design and procurement of exhibit and promotion items, and provided general support to department and ministerial participation in trade shows, trade missions and special events.

Main activities during the reporting period included:

- publishing program fact sheets and co-operative development guides, small business handouts, and other publications (a complete listing of publications is provided at the back of the annual report);
- co-ordinating Saskatchewan exhibits at ABIC 98 and Bio98, two major biotechnology conferences in Saskatoon and New York, respectively;
- researching client and business attitudes which were used as background information for the department reorganization; and,
- maintaining the department website.

Accountability And Issues Identification

A major role of the branch continued to be the identification of issues and the development of strategic communications plans to address them. The branch prepared communications strategies in connection with Cabinet Decision Items (CDIs), as well as miscellaneous strategies relating to specific projects or funding involving the department. The branch also did polling and media monitoring to track issues pertaining to the government and the department and its programs.

During the reporting period, the branch:

- prepared and implemented more than 20 communication strategies for department initiatives or programs;
- monitored newspaper clippings for stories and issues related to department programs and initiatives;
- produced the department's annual report for the 1997-98 fiscal year; and
- undertook the department's "House Business" responsibilities, providing information to the Legislative Assembly in response to oral and written questions.

1999-2000 Objectives

- Promote Saskatchewan's business advances through innovation and diversification.
- Provide a framework for undertaking a co-ordinated, long-term approach to investment attraction and out-of-province marketing.
- Use stakeholder relations and targeted communications on business successes to encourage optimism among Saskatchewan residents, particularly young people, about the province's opportunities and potential.
- Improve perception by the business community inside and outside the province that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business.
- Promote the government's strategic and partnership approach to economic development.

For more information contact:

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Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Synchrotron Branch

The Synchrotron Branch manages the Province of Saskatchewan's interest in the Canadian Light Source (CLS) Synchrotron, a $174 million science and technology facility that will be constructed on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. The national facility will be owned by the university, but managed collaboratively by the university, the provincial and federal governments and other stakeholders.

A synchrotron is an advanced materials research tool that uses a high intensity light source of infrared, ultraviolet and x-ray radiation. This light is used to probe the structure of matter and analyze physical, chemical, geological and biological processes. Canada is currently the only G7 nation without a synchrotron facility, and when built, the CLS will be Canada's sole source of synchrotron light.

The CLS will serve industrial, government and academic interests from coast to coast and will be linked initially to research investigation in four key areas:

- biotechnology, biopharmaceuticals and medicine;
- mining, natural resources and the environment;
- advanced materials and manufacturing; and
- telecommunications and information technology.

During 1998-99, the branch worked closely with officials at the university, Western Economic Diversification Canada and other agencies in developing project parameters and structures, promoting the facility and attracting external investment. The branch also took a lead role in supporting the university's funding application to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), an independent corporation established by the Government of Canada to strengthen Canadian research capability and infrastructure at Canadian universities, colleges, hospitals and other non-profit research institutes.

On March 30, 1999, the CFI approved funding of $56.4 million to the project, thus allowing it to proceed to the construction phase in the summer of 1999. The synchrotron is expected to be operational in late 2003.

1999-2000 Objectives

- Promote the CLS and take a lead role in facilitating the participation and investment by other stakeholders, from across the country and around the world;
- Work with other project partners to ensure that the project is being developed and managed in an efficient and effective manner; and
- Develop strategies and policies that link the CLS to the long-term development of key economic sectors.

For more information, contact:

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Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Corporate Management Division

This division co-ordinates the work of most of the department's service areas. It has three branches: Financial and Administrative Services, Human Resources and Information System Services. The division also co-ordinates all legislative and regulatory amendments, processes Orders-in-Council and handles Freedom of Information requests.

Financial and Administrative Services

Financial and Administrative Services provides general operating, financial and legislative services to the department and to the Office of Northern Affairs. The key activities of the branch include:

- co-ordination of the preparation of the department's budget to ensure that priorities receive funding, and liaison and negotiation with Treasury Board;
- revenue and expenditure processing including appropriation control, contract administration and appropriate legislative authority for payments;
- financial analysis and consolidation of the department's monthly expenditure forecast;
- general administrative and financial support to ensure successful implementation of department initiatives;
- provision of quality legislative services to the department; and
- provision of access to information in accordance with appropriate legislation.

Branch activities during 1998-99 are summarized under the following broad objectives or categories:

Effective, Efficient Client Service

The branch set timelines for all measurable processes, which included supplier payment and revenue processing, quarterly reports, year-end schedules and reports, and inquiry response times. Timeline targets were met, and often exceeded.

Effective Project Management to Meet Financial Targets

The branch co-ordinated and consolidated the annual department budget, ensuring that it was submitted on time. The budget was subsequently realigned to reflect the department's reorganization at mid year.

Monthly forecasts were accurately completed and submitted to Treasury Board on time. The final forecast was within two per cent of the year's actual expenditures.

In conjunction with Saskatchewan Finance, the branch implemented the use of the government purchase card within the department, thereby reducing the number of payment transactions.

The branch also monitored sponsorships and loan guarantees to ensure compliance with the funding or program criteria.

Improved Service Delivery

Following post reorganization staff moves, the branch surveyed affected employees to establish a baseline for staff moves and to seek input on determining options for improved service delivery. Results indicated that overall satisfaction on the branch's facilitation of staff moves was 95 per cent.

To assist managers in directing staff to use the most cost effective travel, the branch developed Central Vehicle Agency (CVA) and personal vehicle usage guidelines. Managers were also provided with quarterly CVA and personal vehicle distance reports, detailing their staff's travel costs.

To assist staff in meeting project timelines, the legislative services officer developed a guide to internal implementation of cabinet documents.

Human Resources

Human Resources works collaboratively with managers and employees to:

- provide proactive and leading edge human resource management strategies that support the department's staff and its corporate direction; and
- provide leadership, expertise and support in decision-making, administrative human resource management, and organizational development to assist the department to achieve its strategic objectives.

In July 1998, Human Resources developed a 20-month work plan (to March, 2000). During the fiscal year, Human Resources' accomplishments included:

Strategic Human Resource Management

- administering the first year of the Campbell Organizational Survey, which measured 17 specific topics related to job satisfaction and productivity, and developing action plans to address employee concerns;
- completing an on-line orientation manual to be used in conjunction with the department's employee orientation program; and
- assisting managers in the development of branch work and learning plans, including employee/branch recognition.

Consultative/Advisory

- assisting the department's Employment Equity Committee and supporting designated groups in order to achieve employment equity representation within the department;
- supporting the department's Union/Management Committee to build stronger union/management partnerships;
- working with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the Scope Review to support employees and managers during transition;
- advising and consulting on staffing and classification issues; and
- working with the PSC to develop competencies for in-scope positions.

Learning and Development

- creating a learning and development framework, which will lead to the development of a learning policy; and
- developing a five-year training strategy, and further refining that strategy to include a needs analysis.

Organizational Development

- establishing a department committee to address work and family issues such as telecommuting and flexible work hours policies (this committee resulted from the department's participation in the Saskatchewan Public Task Force on *Balancing Work and Family Survey*).

Administrative Human Resource Management

- providing accurate, relevant and timely human resource information;
- providing training and support to a pilot group on the new Intranet Personnel System (IPS) to determine the information that managers require; and
- advising on benefit application and administration relating to retirements, coverage and procedures.

Information Systems Services

The goals of the Information Systems Services Branch are to:

- direct the planning, development, implementation and support of information technology (IT) and computer services for both the department and the Office of Northern Affairs; and
- manage the departments' investment in information technology.

The branch's key accomplishments for 1998-99 were to:

- develop a Year 2000 action plan for the department and the Office of Northern Affairs to ensure that all systems will be Y2K ready. All systems, software and hardware were scheduled to be ready by the fall of 1999.
- implement high capacity Local Area Network (LAN) file servers in Regina, La Ronge and Saskatoon.
- develop a request for proposal for development of an Information Technology Architecture (ITA) project, with completion of the ITA scheduled for the 1999-2000 fiscal year.
- design and develop new department databases: for task management, company mailings, business regulations and the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Program.
- develop and implement a computing and electronic resource information policy for the department to ensure appropriate use of information technology.
- develop and implement computer disaster backup and recovery procedures.
- implement an agreement with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food for shared email and Internet for the department and the Office of Northern Affairs and for reciprocal disaster contingency services.

- implement an agreement with Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs for shared Wide Area Network (WAN) access.
- assist the department in implementing its new organizational structure in terms of systems and data access requirements.

Systems Services Branch staff represented the department on several government-wide committees that dealt with IT issues.

1999-2000 Objectives

Financial and Administrative Services

- Ensure that the current fiscal forecast system is Y2K compliant, and as resources permit, replace this DOS system with Windows software;
- Participate in the department's Information Technology Architecture project, moving the DOS-based budget forecasting system to a Windows based system;
- Distribute the branch's client satisfaction survey to the department, measuring results against the 1994 and 1997 surveys; and
- Work with Systems Services to develop a department-wide security policy to address personal safety and secure department property.

Human Resources

- Lead the development and implementation of the human resources strategy, in alignment with the strategic objectives of the department;
- Follow up with a second Campbell Survey, and develop action plans and changes to address employee concerns;
- Develop employee career profiles for managers' use in career development and succession planning;
- Continue supporting employees in developing competencies and career planning;
- Work to implement objectives for the Human Resources 1998-2000 work plan; and
- Implement training initiatives identified in the learning and development strategy.

Information Systems Services

- Develop the Information Technology Architecture project to use IT to meet the business needs of the department and ensure that the department's investment in technology is optimally utilized;
- Develop a framework for implementing the ITA as financial and human resources permit;
- Complete implementation of the Year 2000 Action Plan;
- Enhance and maintain the Local Area Networks (LANs) to provide efficient access to resources;
- Implement information technology policies and best practices in accordance with recommendations of the government's Systems Management Council and the Provincial Auditor; and
- Participate in a pilot project for a unified secure data network.

For more information, contact:

Corporate Management Division
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Financial and Administrative Services:
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Human Resources
Telephone: (306) 787-8717
Facsimile: (306) 787-8447

Information Systems Services
Telephone: (306) 787-2692
Facsimile: (306) 798-0056

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Saskatchewan Business Development Office, Ottawa

The department maintains a business development office in Ottawa to increase Saskatchewan's share of the federal procurement market. The focus of the office's activity is federal major Crown projects, and procurement opportunities related to them. The office also provides information on Saskatchewan to government agencies, private sector organizations and the general public, and assists Saskatchewan based businesses in their dealings with the federal government and other agencies in the Ottawa area.

The office actively promotes Saskatchewan companies to prime contractors and sub-contractors who have won, or are in the process of bidding, on federal major Crown projects. This approach has resulted over the years in significant successes of Saskatchewan companies: in job creation and maintenance, industrial diversification, and global profile.

In undertaking its work, the office makes intelligent use of industrial benefits or offsets, which are federally defined and regulated conditions attached to major Crown procurements. The office works closely with department sector specialists who in turn work closely with industry and businesses across the province and the country.

Federal major Crown projects are typically high dollar value, in excess of $100 million, are technically complex, and have a long lead-time and life cycle. It is not inconceivable for a project to have a ten-year lag between conception and award of a contract. Saskatchewan companies normally operate at the sub-contractor level, with work flowing through agreements with the prime contracting authority. Ideally, work obtained through a major Crown project will lead to other opportunities and additional contracts, which may or may not be related to the original opportunity. The exposure to large corporations, both national and transnational, has provided visibility for Saskatchewan companies that might not otherwise have occurred.

The Ottawa office has been involved with projects such as the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program in Moose Jaw and the Department of National Defence's Tactical Communications Command and Control System (TCCCS), which provided major contract work to SED Systems of Saskatoon. The office has helped the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) secure contract work from the Department of National Defence, and has worked on projects with the Canadian Space Agency, Transport Canada and other federal government departments.

For more information, contact:

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K1P 6L1

Telephone: (613) 232-6644
Facsimile: (613) 232-4472

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Financial Report (Budgetary Expenditure)

Appropriation and Expenditure by Subvote and Subprogram

(Shaded totals correspond to the 1998-99 Public Accounts, Volume 2)

	Original Estimate 1998-99 ($000's)	Revised Estimate 1998-99 ($000's)	Actual 1998-99 ($000's)
Administration			
EC01 Administration Total	**$ 1,993**	**$ 2,490**	**$ 2,467**
Accommodation and Central Services			
EC02 Accommodation and Central Services Total	**$ 1,882**	**$ 1,882**	**$ 1,856**
Regional Economic Development			
Regional Economic Development Programs	$ 3,038	$ 5,893	$ 5,875
Regional Economic Development Grants	$ 2,700	$ 2,286	$ 2,282
EC05 Regional Economic Development Total	**$ 5,738**	**$ 8,179**	**$ 8,157**
Industry Sector Development			
EC03 Industry Sector Development Total	**$ 2,388**	**$ 848**	**$ 785**
Business Investment Programs			
Programs Management	$ 1,830	$ 600	$ 427
Strategic Initiatives Fund	$ 5,925	$ 5,757	$ 5,457
Economic Partnership Agreements	$ 3,750	$ 3,750	$ 3,750
Communications and Marketing	$ 1,344	$ 1,199	$ 1,160
EC07 Business Investment Programs Total	**$ 12,849**	**$ 11,306**	**$ 10,794**
Co-operatives Directorate			
EC12 Co-operatives Directorate Total	**$ 725**	**$ 725**	**$ 717**
Policy and Co-ordination			
Policy and Coordination	$ 1,337	$ 1,442	$ 1,420
Information Technology Office	$ 501	$ 541	$ 521
EC06 Policy and Co-ordination Total	**$ 1,838**	**$ 1,983**	**$ 1,941**
Tourism Saskatchewan Grant			
EC04 Tourism Saskatchewan Total	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**

Financial Report (Budgetary Expenditure)

Appropriation and Expenditure by Subvote and Subprogram

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Tourism Saskatchewan Grant			
EC04 Tourism Saskatchewan Total	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**

Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Grant			
EC11 Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Total	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation			
Investment Division Total	$ 1,517	$ 1,517	$ 1,517
Loan Loss Provision	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 2,499
Development Division Total	$ 2,204	$ 2,204	$ 2,204
EC09 Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation	**$ 6,221**	**$ 6,221**	**$ 6,220**
Office of Northern Affairs			
Northern Programs Management	$ 1,353	$ 1,747	$ 1,745
Resource Policy and Program Coordination	$ 524	$ 524	$ 407
Economic and Business Development Programs	$ 2,883	$ 2,489	$ 2,302
Northern Commercial Fish Transportation Subsidy	$ 345	$ 345	$ 289
EC10 Office of Northern Affairs	**$ 5,105**	**$ 5,105**	**$ 4,743**
ECONOMIC AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	**$ 48,245**	**$ 48,245**	**$ 47,186**

Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Grant			
EC11 Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Total	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation			
Investment Division Total	$ 1,517	$ 1,517	$ 1,517
Loan Loss Provision	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 2,499
Development Division Total	$ 2,204	$ 2,204	$ 2,204
EC09 Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation	**$ 6,221**	**$ 6,221**	**$ 6,220**
Office of Northern Affairs			
Northern Programs Management	$ 1,353	$ 1,747	$ 1,745
Resource Policy and Program Coordination	$ 524	$ 524	$ 407
Economic and Business Development Programs	$ 2,883	$ 2,489	$ 2,302
Northern Commercial Fish Transportation Subsidy	$ 345	$ 345	$ 289
EC10 Office of Northern Affairs	**$ 5,105**	**$ 5,105**	**$ 4,743**
ECONOMIC AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	**$ 48,245**	**$ 48,245**	**$ 47,186**

Legislative Responsibilities

During the reporting period, the Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development was responsible for the following Acts:

The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993

The Act established the Department of Economic Development (department name has since changed to the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development) using standard departmental provisions and provides authority to guide, promote, co-ordinate, and implement policies, strategies and programs in support of economic development. The *Small Business Loans Association Program Regulations* are established under this Act.

The Co-operative Guarantee Act

The Act was established in the 1940s to enable the government to assist co-operatives that do not qualify for conventional loans by providing a government guarantee of loans made through an approved lender. The Co-operative Guarantee Board, established by the legislation, did not meet during the reporting year and no applications were received. There are also no outstanding loans.

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act

The Act and Regulations set the parameters for the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Program, including: establishment of Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations, investment of monies, issuance of tax credits, and compliance. As well, the Act provides for the issuance of tax credits to federally-registered labour-sponsored venture capital corporations.

The Rural Development Act

The Act, which is jointly administered with Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing, provides the Minister with the authority to formulate and carry out economic and social programs that benefit persons residing in rural areas. The legislation was transferred when the department received responsibility for the Rural Development Corporation Program; however, this program was wound down at the end of fiscal 1997-98.

The Small Business Investment Incentives Act

The Act provides authority for the Small Business Investment Incentives Program, which was established to provide grants to investors for small business investments. The program is not currently active; however, the department has ongoing registration management responsibilities.

The Venture Capital Tax Credit Act

The Act provides authority for the Venture Capital Tax Credit Program. The program is not currently active but there are existing registrations managed by the department.

The Tourism Authority Act

The Act provides for the establishment of the Saskatchewan Tourism Authority which is charged with the responsibility to facilitate the marketing of tourism; the provision of visitor and information services; the education and training of individuals involved in the tourism industry; the planning and development of tourism destination areas; the administration of tourism funding programs (other than capital funding); research and policy development in tourism; public awareness of tourism; and the development and promotion of tourism in Saskatchewan.

Legislative Amendments:

During the reporting period, there were no amendments made to legislation governed by the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development.

In addition, no legislation was introduced or repealed by the department during the reporting year.

Publications

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development distributed the following publications during the reporting year:

Partnership for Growth and Partnership for Renewal Economic Strategies

- *Partnership for Growth* – Progress Report Year One (1997)
- *Partnership for Growth* – Progress Report Year Two (1998)
- *Partnership for Growth* – Building on the Renewal of the Saskatchewan Economy (1996)
- *Partnership for Renewal* – A Strategy for the Saskatchewan Economy (1992)
- *The Competitiveness of Saskatchewan's Business Climate* (1997)

Economic Policy

- Profile and Performance of Saskatchewan Business
- Quarterly Economic Forecast Watch
- Monthly Economic Indicator Watch

Co-operative Development

- Building Effective Partnerships: The Co-operative Sector and Government in Saskatchewan (Mandate Paper)
- Co-operative Development Fact Sheets (ongoing series)
  - Co-operatives in Saskatchewan: An Information Series
  - Choosing a Business Structure
  - The Co-operative Structure
  - Registration of a Co-operative
  - A Co-operative Glossary
  - Conducting Effective Meetings
- Co-operative Governance: Boards, Officers and Committees and Their Roles and Responsibilities
- Core Functions and Processes of Co-operative Governance
- International Co-operative Alliance Statement on the Co-operative Identity
- New Generation Co-operatives For Agricultural Processing and Value-Added Projects
- Financing and Financial Management for Saskatchewan Co-operatives
- Articles and Bylaws for Saskatchewan Co-operatives
- New Generation Co-operatives For Agricultural Processing and Value-Added Projects: A Development Guide
- The Social and Economic Importance of the Co-operative Sector in Saskatchewan
- Co-operative Development Assistance Program fact sheet

Economic Diversification

- Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide (available on department website only)
- Major Projects Inventory (available only on the website)
- Directory of Saskatchewan Public Sector Purchasers
- Construction Tendering Bonding
- Directory of Professional Consultants in Saskatchewan
- Saskatchewan-made Consumer Products Directory

Regional Economic Development and Small Businesses

- Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) White Paper
- REDA White Paper Phase II
- REDAs: Organization and Funding
- Directory of Business Associations in Saskatchewan (1997)
- Business Information Resource Materials (69 titles)
- Small Business Loans Association Program fact sheet

Business Immigration Programs

- Business Immigration Programs fact sheet
- Saskatchewan Guidelines: Immigrant Investor Program
- Saskatchewan Guidelines: Immigrant Entrepreneur Program
- Provincial Nominee Program Guidelines
- Provincial Nominee Program Fact Sheet
- Introduction to Saskatchewan Fact Sheet
- Saskatchewan, Canada Bookmark

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Program

- Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations
  - LSVCC Employee Funds Type B fact sheet
  - LSVCC Pool Funds Type A fact sheet
  - LSVCC Brochure

Industry Development Program

- Small Business Loans Associations fact sheet

Investment Attraction

- Saskatchewan Success Through Innovation out-of-province marketing kit
  - Overview brochure
  - Success Through Innovation sector specific fact sheets - agriculture equipment manufacturing, agbiotech, information technology, pork production, call centres, cultural industries, food and crop processing, forestry, mining, oil and gas, tourism
- Saskatchewan Ambassador Program kit:
  - Sector brochures
  - Community Profiles
  - CD-ROM
  - Video

Other

- Department annual reports
- *Saskatchewan Business Unlimited* quarterly magazine (free by subscription)
- *Saskatchewan Economic News* monthly news summary (free by subscription)

For more information contact:

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Telephone: (306) 787-1691
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Centre for Business Development
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Regina, Saskatchewan
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1133 - 4th Street
Estevan, Saskatchewan
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Moose Jaw

45 Thatcher Drive East
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
S6H 6V2

North Battleford

1202 - 101st Street
North Battleford, Saskatchewan
S9A 1E9

Yorkton

50 Smith Street E
Yorkton, Saskatchewan
S3N OH5

Saskatoon

122 - 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 2H6

206 - 15 Innovation Boulevard
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 2X8

Swift Current

885 - 6th Avenue NE
Swift Current, Saskatchewan
S9H 2M9

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1084 Central Avenue
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
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Office Of Northern Affairs

Mistasinihk Place
1328 LaRonge Avenue
Box 5000
La Ronge, Saskatchewan
SOJ 1LO

Telephone Numbers

Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC)	1-800-667-4374
Northern Business Directory	1-800-663-4065
Northern Development Fund	1-800-663-4065
Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat	1-800-577-2668
Office of Northern Affairs	(306) 425-4200
Saskatchewan Economic Development Field Offices	1-800-265-2001

Glossary of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations were used in the 1998-99 Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development.

AIT	Agreement on Internal Trade
ATAS	Apparel and Textile Association of Saskatchewan
BIS	Business Information System
CCA	Canadian Co-operative Association
CCED	Cabinet Committee on Economic Development
CDAP	Co-operative Development Assistance Program
CDI	Cabinet Decision Item
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
CLS	Canadian Light Source (synchrotron project)
CSBSC	Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre
CVA	Central Vehicle Agency
DND	Department of National Defence
ECAS	Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan
ISO 9000	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technology
ITA	Information Technology Architecture
ITO	Information Technology Office
LAN	Local Area Network
LSVCC	Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Organization
NFTC	NATO Flying Training in Canada Project
NRC	National Research Council
PACE	Provincial Action Committee on the Economy
PAMI	Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute
PFG	Partnership for Growth
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
PSC	Public Service Commission
R&D	Research and Development
REDA	Regional Economic Development Authority
SBLA	Small Business Loans Association
SCCD	Saskatchewan Council for Community Development
SIAST	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
SGGF	Saskatchewan Government Growth Fund
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOCO	Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
SRC	Saskatchewan Research Council
STEP	Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership
WEPA	Western Economic Partnership Agreement
Y2K	Year 2000